Some Problems of the Early Historic Studies in Karnataka

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Places Mentioned: Chandravalli, Brahmagiri, Sannati, Maski, T.Narasipur, Hemmige, Hallur, Wadgoan, Madhavapur, Piklihal, Pattadakal, Kurugodu

Link to original article in Kannada:
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Summary:

The period posterior to the pre-historic period, which can be included definitely into the historic period is called early-historic. The special features of this period are the red or brown burnt pottery, with white kaolin linear designs. This was also called 'Andhra Pottery'. Bricks were extensively used during this period. The Shatavahana coins were also found in these layers to help fix its date.

Early-historic layer was first discovered in Karnataka by M. H. Krishna at Chandravalli. Basing on the coins, he divided the period as earlier and later. In 1947 Mortimer Wheeler after conducting excavations at Chandravalli called the period as Shatavahana epoch and divided it into three periods. According to Wheeler, this period had pottery with white designs, the coins of the Shatavahanas and the , Romans and brick structures. Wheeler also located similar layer at Brahmagiri, of the post-Megalithic period, There were no coins, and he dated it as belonging to 1st to 3rd century A.D.

It was DK. Thapar, after his Maski excavation of 1954 that used the word early-historic period instead of Shatavahana or Andhra culture to this layer. Beads, stucco figurines, bangles, etc. were also found at Maski. Dr. M. Sheshadri located similar sites at T. Narsipur and Hemmige. At Hallur only pottery of this epoch were found. At Banavasi, red, black and rouletted ware and punch-marked coins, and the mould of a Roman coin were excavated. The stucco figurines found here resemble Mathura ones. The Wadgoan-Madhavapur site is a fine example of this epoch with many brick buildings. Surface finds of this epoch are found at Sannati. Alchin's finds at Piklihal, S. R. Rao's at Pattadakal and finds at Kurugodu are notable.

The period between 4th cent. B.C. and 1st cent. A.D. which synchronizes with the Mauryan age, also had megalithic culture in Karnataka. The period from 1st to 3rd cent. A.D. which had red pottery with white designs, Roman, Shatavahana, Chutu or Maharathi coins and rouletted pottery in some places, has to be called the second phase of early-historic. It is wrong to call the latter the Andhra epoch. Thus we can postulate two phases of the early historic period in Karnatka.